

## Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 PRS-01 OMB-01

DRC-01 SR-02 ORM-03 IO-14 AID-20 /112 W

----- 041606

R 081125Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4460

INFO USIA

CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

UNCLAS PHNOM PENH 309

USIA ALSO PASS VOA NEWSROOM

E.O. 1165-: N/A

TAGS: MOPS, MILI, PINS, BUCB

SUBJ: CIVILIAN CASUALTIES OF MILITARY ACTION NORTHWEST OF  
PHNOM PENH

1. SUMMARY. PRESS REPORTS HAVE REFERRED TO A HIGH NUMBER  
OF CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN THE CURRENT FIGHTING NO  
THE WEST  
OF THE CAPITAL CITY, NOTING THAT MANY WERE CAUGHT IN  
CROSSFIRE. KC HAVE IN FACT ROUNDED UP THE POPULATION IN  
THIS AREA AND USED SOME AS SHIELDS FOR THEIR ADVANCING  
TROOPS, AMONG WHICH ARE TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND OF LARGELY IN-  
EXPERIENCED WOMEN. FANK FORCES HAVE, HOWEVER, SUCCESSFULLY  
PARRIED THIS TACTIC WITH WHAT WE BELIEVE TO BE MINIMAL  
CIVILIAN LOSSES. WE ARE URGING LOCAL OFFICIALS TO  
PUBLICIZE THE FOLLOWING DETAILS, WHICH WE HOPE CAN ALSO  
BE REFLECTED IN FUTURE VOTREATMENT OF ACTION IN THAT  
AREA. END SUMMARY

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2. WHEN 28TH BRIGADE MOVED TO COUNTER ENEMY ADVANCE

NORTHWEST OF PHNOM PENH ON JANUARY 5, ENEMY WAS FOUND TO HAVE GROUPED A LARGE NUMBER OF LOCAL INHABITANTS IN FRONT OF THEIR FORCES AS A SHIELD. THE BRIGADE'S COMMANDER BG YAI SINDY USED INKPRECT FIRE (PRINCIPALLY 4.2" MORTARS) AGAINST THE NEMY'S REAR, CAREFULLY MOVING THE BARRAGE FORWARD TO MAIN ENEMY LINES WITHOUT ENDANGERING THE CAPTIVE CIVILIANS. CONCURRENTLY FANK FORCES OUTFLANKED THE LINE OF CIVILIANS AND ATTACKED ENEMY, INFLECTING HEAVY LOSSES. (BODY COUNT SET AT 261 KC KILLED WHILE CIVILIANS

REPORTED ENEMY SUFFERED MUCH HIGHER LOSSES.) SUBSEQUENTLY, 28 TH BRIGADE RECOVERED 3,000 CIVILIANS PREVIOUSLY HELD BY ENEMY, AMONG WHOM WERE MANY USED AS SHIELD.

3. ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT A DENSELY POPULATED AREA, CIVILIAN POPULATION HAS, OF COURSE, SUFFERED FROM ENEMY'S ATTACK. AS IN PREVIOUS OPERATIONS OF THIS E RT, THE KC HAVE FORCED FAMILIES FROM THEIR VILLAGES. IN ADDITION TO THOSE MENTIONED PARAMBW ABOVE, AN UNKNOWN BUT PROBABLY SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF VILLAAGES HAVE BEEN FORCES

INTO TWO REGROUPMENT AREAS JUST SOUTH OF THE PREK PHNOU RIVER. WE DO NOT YET HAVE AN ACCURATE COUNT OF THE REFUGEES FLEEING BEFORE THE ENEMY BUT WE ESTIMATE THEY NUMBERED ABOUT 2,500 FAMILIES AS OF JANUARY 7,500 OF WHOM ARE FROM THE NORTHERN DIKE REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROJECTS. SOME 10 PERCENT OF THE RESETTLED REFUGEES REMAINED TO GUARD THEIR PROPERTIES.

4. KC DISREGARD FOR HUMAN LIFE IS ALSO EVIDENT IN FACT THAT THEY PLACED IN THEIR FRONT LINES TWO ALL FEMALE INFANTRY BATTALIONS CONSISTING AT LEAST IN PART OF ADOLESCENTS WITH NO COMBAT EXPERIENCE. THIS HAS BEEN VERIFIED BY THE CAPTURE OF SIX PRISONERS FROM THESE BATTALIONS, ONE OF WHOM WAS 14 YEARS OF AGE AND HAD ONLY TWO MONTHS OF MILITARY SERVICE.  
ENDERS

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